# THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE;

OR

# Literary Miscellany.

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FOR THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE.

## THE PHILANTHROPIST, NO I.

*"Sunt lacbrymæ rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt."*

"Tears are a debt due to misery, and the woes of mortality affect the mind."

*Pursuits of Literature.*

The philosopher may look upon the misfortunes of mankind with stoical apathy, as the consequence of their follies, and deem them undeserving of his pity or regard; but the philanthropist will drop a tear to human wretchedness, whatever may have been its origin. If the frailty of mortality is an inherent principle, surely its unfortunate consequences claim our commiseration; and he who coldly calculates the imprudence or the errors from whence they proceeded, is distinguished by reasoning faculties alone from the brute creation. To compassionate the distresses of others when we are not in a capacity to relieve them, is evincing a disposition equally amiable as if it were associated with ability. Let not then the man who feels that he cannot alleviate wretchedness, refuse to the sufferer his sympathy, for to each he is equally entitled; and if we cannot bestow the one, let us not withhold the other.

Yet while actual misfortune is in any case deserving our attention, it is an indubitable truth that it too frequently originates in folly and imprudence. To prevent its occurrence the causes must be done away. To effect this desirable purpose requires the combination of all the active powers of the mind, for it comprises all that can result from virtuous principles and mental energy. Yet it is a simple path that we must pursue; and were it not that *man is prone to evil as the sparks fly upward*, it would be no task to perform. Difficult as it may be to avoid imprudence at some period of our lives, caution may prevent, by attentive observation, the commission of errors which the strongest abilities cannot repair. Then permit the PHILANTHROPIST (who though self-styled, presumes he possesses a portion of sensibility for the welfare of his fellow creatures) to guard his readers against the first steps in the path of error. Let him conjure them to dissolve the liliputian ties of imprudence which are twining around them, ere they become too gigantic to be destroyed and too numerous to overcome. Speculative observations on men and manners are seldom found to benefit the general mass of readers, although they may afford momentary amusement, and therfore the writer who hopes to reform the vices of the age, and correct the abuses which have crept into society, must be courageous to attempt, and ingenious to succeed. To advise is a thankless office. To caution is to excite contempt; but he who with the fascination of an Addison could command the attention of his readers, by the elegance of style and purity of diction, and lead them insensibly to the study of the more sublime truths of morality and philosophy, to the contemplation of the human mind, and a knowledge of its frailty, would indeed *deserve well of his country*. But alas! where is a mind so endowed to be found? Rare indeed are the sons of genius in our *enlightened age* who combine the "*utile dulci*" and arrest the attention as *with the spell of the sorceress*;—sunk in sloth or revelling in the lap of ease, their powers, their virtues, their attainments are lost to society and useless to themselves. In selfish enjoyments their social and moral duties, their obligations to diffuse the knowledge they have acquired, are forgotten. Then while the constellations in the firmament of science are shrouded in darkness of their own creation, eclipsed by the intervention of sordid views and earthly pursuits, or like the comet gleaming on the world with bright but passing splendour, shall a star of the *least* magnitude in the literary hemisphere presume with his twinkling light to supply the want of their more glorious beams?—THE PHILANTHROPIST expects not the plaudits of his readers nor the admiration of the world. To avoid reproach shall be his aim; to escape censure his ambition, and his greatest hope is that the justice of the reader will approve his design, if compelled to condemn the execution. He will not be either the Diogenes or Heraclitus of the day—he will not weep over the absurdities of fashion or laugh at the misfortunes of the most imprudent of his brethren, and if instigated to apply the lash of satire to the follies or the vices of the age, he will strenuously avoid a collision with the feelings of honest integrity. Such are the views of THE PHILANTHROPIST—too humble to obtain the imputation of arrogance, yet too exalted to merit contempt.

W.

FOR THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE.

## THE MANIAC'S SOLILOQUY.

Scene—*A steep and rugged mountain.*

*Messrs. Editors,*

The following was written some few years ago. If you should not deem it too fanciful and incorrect, you are respectfully requested to insert it.

Suspend thy torturing power, fond Recollection!
In dull Oblivion's wave my senses steep;
Let nought disturb the slumb'ring fiend Reflection,
Or waken Anguish from her transient sleep.

Oft when the Moon ascends in cloudless lustre,
To cheer the landscape with her pallid beam;
When peasant swains in many a joyful cluster,
Collect beside some gently murmuring stream:

On that tall cliff, or this aspiring mountain,
That frowns terrific on the vale below;
To falling torrent or pellucid fountain,
I tell the mournful story of my woe.

That once the beams of Hope my path enlight'ned,
Gave added radiance to each new-born day;
In Pleasure's treacherous glass my prospects bright-'ned,
And glow'd refulgent in the glitt'ring ray.

Fell Disappointment Joy's gay harvest blighted,
Expell'd the flatterer from my aching breast;

Bade me mid dark Despair's drear wild benighted,
To wander hopeless of a place of rest.

Dispell'd the motley visions Hope created,
Bade "moody madness" brood around my head;
Nor yet with vengeance on his victim sated,
Drove me a maniac forth to seek my bread.

By poverty oppress'd, by friends deserted,
Despised and injured by my brother man;
No hand that might perhaps have woes averted,
Was e'er extended to prolong my span.

From worldly sycophants whose trade's deceiving,
From all the meanly proud and little great,
From fond credulity, each tale believing,
From slaves of Fashion, and from tools of state.

I fled from Hope, from Fear, from Joy and Sorrow,
From all I fled, nor left a thought behind;
Oft I review the past, but for the morrow
I ne'er prepare, because 'tis like mankind:

Always deluding with expected pleasure,
Like them it promises but ne'er performs;—
These mountain scenes are now my only treasure,
Here, I hold converse with the King of storms.

When the proud Genius of the tempest, sailing,
Or some black cloud, directs the whirlwind's force,
While far below are prostrate crouds bewailing,
The desolation that attends his course.

I careless smile,—to me it bears no terror:—
Firm as my seat its fury I defy;
Let him who wanders in a world of error,
Shrink from the tempests that deform the sky.

I see around me lightnings harmless playing,
They form a wreathe to deck my aching head;
But there, below, I see them thousands slaying,
And striking nations with an aweful dread.

See yon poor mortal startle at the thunder!
And fly for shelter to his towering dome;
While on the scene I gaze in silent wonder!
Content and fearless in my rocky home.

No sylphs or gnomes, contribute to my slumbers,
With choral songs from bower or shadowy dell;
No moonstruck minstrel's harsh discordant numbers
Disturb the quiet of my tranquil cell.

To me more sweet the music of the torrent,
That tumbles headlong from yon moss-grown rock!
Or the deep murmur of the foaming current,
Where cliffs uprising brave the powerful shock.

To me more sweet—the wandering eagle screaming,
Its harsh shrill anthems in the ear of night;
Than warbling nightingales to poets dreaming,
When Fancy wings her gay fantastic flight.

I love to wander wrapt in meditation,
Midst these wild scenes, thro' this embowering wood;
No ravenous wolf disturbs my contemplation,
He knows my step and flies afar for food.

When brooding tempest darken all the heaven!
Nor moon nor star affords its twinkling light,
When sharp and chill blows the keen gale of even,
And adds new terrors to the black'ning night!

On some tall cliff I view the meteor, gleaming
With transient-blaze illume the scene around;
Or o'er the white-top'd wave a moment streaming,
To leave the world in darkness more profound.

Or listen to the roar of distant ocean,
Whose waves impetuous chide the peaceful shore;
Onward impelled, they rush with wild commotion,
And startle echo with their sullen roar:

Or to the spirits of the night that wander,
O'er trackless wilds or skim the lurid air;
Complain that on the rugged mountain yonder,
The night-fiends chaunt their songs of wild despair.

That oft at midnight's dark and gloomy hour,
Shriecks loud and dismal echo from below;
As though some demon urged his torturing power,
The fierce and vengeful minister of woe:

That oft amid the clouds are spectres dancing,
Or skimming o'er the surface of the wave;
Or through the air on shadowy coursers prancing,
While idly round the wintry tempests rave.

Scarce three nights since, as on the summit seated,
On this high rock I sung my ears to sleep,
A fiend in seraph-garb my senses cheated,
And lur'd me to the borders of the steep.

Then had I fallen, unconscious of my danger,
But some kind spirit hover'd round my head;
Stretch'd forth his arm to save the mountain-ranger,
And rescued sorrows victim from the dead.

Now when grey twilight o'er the landscape stealing,
Veils smiling Nature in a deep'ning gloom;
Here I reflect on man to man unfeeling,
And mark his varied passage to the tomb.

In youth indulging freaks of amorous folly,
In age pursuing wealth's delusive form;
Elate with joy, o'erwhelmed in melancholy,
Or toss'd in Passion's wild destructive storm.

I hate the world, its false deceitful splendour,
The visionary schemes of human joy;
No charm for me has ostentatious grandeur,
Nor dreams of bliss which Truth's bright beams destroy.

Here will I dwell, where Fancy's fond delusion,
Shall ne'er disturb my solitary cell;
Far from the jarring scenes of mad confusion,
And fickle fashion's fascinating spell;

Till death from all its cares my breast relieving,
Dissolves the charm that wraps my soul in gloom,
And life's fantastic dreams no more deceiving,
I seek the tranquil mansions of the tomb.

SYLVANUS.

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*To the new Editors of the Evening Fire-side.*

GENTLEMEN,

It is gratifying to find the Evening Fire-side, has commenced with the new year under such pleasing auspices. From a society of Editors we may hope it will be relieved of the antiquated notions and *sombre* prejudices which formerly cast over it a "night of shade." What have we to do with CARAC's visionary gloom —the grammaticisms of the London correspondent, or the obsolete letters of WM. PENN, and such-like things? We have sober things enough at home, and of grammar we had plenty at school. In a paper like yours we expect something lively that will animate the social circle in the long winter evenings. "Simul et jucunda et idonea dicere vita." Blend a large portion of amusement with a little instruction. Give us variety—"variety is the spice of life." Let us have anecdotes, epigrams, bon-mots, and enigmas; and be careful not to omit a regular account of marriages; it would seem as if the old Editors were averse to matrimony from their always keeping *mum*, with respect to this interesting article.—We want something that will gratify curiosity, and excite risibility. Invite SIMON SLOW, SAM SAUNTER, J. CAUSTICUS, and such lads of humour to your circle, whom I suspect the austere tenor of your predecessors in a great measure checked. But above all let me request you to revise the pigeon-hole of oblivion. I am persuaded it retains in *durance vile*, many pieces of merit, which like the victims of arbitrary power in the *Bastile*, require the exertions of a patriotic society to bring them forth to the cheerful light.

I do not speak thus from hearsay only, being myself a sufferer by the *ci-devant* Eds. Something more than six months ago, their seemingly kind and pressing invitation to the sons and daughters of genius, induced me to exert my energies—a poetic piece was the consequence, which I reviewed with critic nicety, copied in a very fair hand, and forwarded to the letter-box. Impatiently waiting for the appearance of the next number, I was anticipating a handsome compliment to the merit of the piece, when judge of my surprise to find when the paper came that in "Notes to Correspondents," my writing was praised at the expense of my poetry, and my production condemned to the pigeon-hole of oblivion. I had just received a cup of tea when the mortification reached me, and to hide my confusion applied the scalding liquor to my lips. I handed Miss Fanny the snuffer-tray instead of the cheese-plate, and actually snuffed the candle with the sugar-tongs. I cannot recollect without pain the sufferings I endured that night, and the many extravagant blunders I committed, so contrary to my usual politeness; and all this was occasioned by the capricious injustice of the Editors, who like the tyrant Domi-

tian, seemed to take a pleasure in sticking the pins of sarcasm through the flies whom their honied words had allured to the letter-box.

Revise, therefore, your pigeon-hole of oblivion, and give us an opportunity of meeting the plaudits of the real judges of taste, and by so doing assure yourselves of the future notice of many

A DESERVING CORRESPONDENT.

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FOR THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE.

*To the Editors,*

A friend so *staunch* as OLIVEBRANCH,
Is quite an acquisition,
He is, sure ye will all agree,
Profound in erudition.

He's INFORMATIONS hearing organ,
A PRODIGY at gingling jargon;
The TRUMPETER of idle rumour,
And *Patent essence* of GOOD HUMOUR.
I think that from our short acquaintance,
Nothing appears to induce repentance:
The love we feel for one another,
You'll please to endeavour not to smother;
Still let it glow with steady flame,
Uninfluenced by the breath of fame,
Though all our other prospects perish,
Mutual affection let us cherish.

His stock of knowledge can't be small,
Who knows what's done and said by all;
Be lib'ral to this knowing chap, and,
He'll tell us all that ever happened!
Still let him feed us till we fatten,
On precious scraps of French and Latin;
We all with literary maw full,
Can swell like him and look as awful:
I've been, dear Editors, o'ertaken,
By grief, and sleep has me forsaken;
I have not slept six minutes yet,
Since hearing of his ague fit;
His muse asserts (and I believe her)
'Twas follow'd by a raging fever,
Which (as conjecture makes it out,
Who sometimes knows what she's about)
Leap'd over Reason's bound'ry fences,
And rudely trespassed on his senses.
'Tis strange that NOSTRUM who was present,
And symptoms saw that look unpleasant,
Did not for pity's-sake implore him,
To wait until *he* could restore him:
Before he took the exalted station,
In which much ratiocination
Is needful to insure success,
To those who fame-wards wish to press.
He stands on ticklish ground whose trust is,
In generosity and justice:
Our nearest friends are sometimes fickle,
Else SIMON in his "dismal pickle,"
Had not been suffer'd to escape,
And run the hazard of a *scrape!*
But NOSTRUM who was fond of rare show,
Lov'd any thing in form of scarecrow;
On much diversion *wisely* counted,
If he could get the *maniac* mounted!
On an old nag of neighbour ROBBIN,
Whom for conciseness we'll call Dobbin;
Then know ye bards, who haunt Parnassus,
Dobbin's the name of his Pegasus.

Dobbin was brought, sir SIMON stept on,
And look'd like some fierce son of Neptune;
His arms and legs, whose oscillations,
Kept time with his vociferations!
First struck his beast, and then the air,
Poor Dobbin was obliged to bear
The just chastisement of his master,
And try'd to move a little faster:
In short, he cut so odd a figure,
That all who saw him, had to snicker:
Tho' adverse winds forc'd him to tack,
And for a long time kept him back,
About the middle of the journey,
Then to the middle, readers turn ye;
I've heard it confidently said, they
Made but very little head-way;
And two whole weeks were spent you'll find,
In beating up against the wind.

But after many vigorous trials,
Wond'rous escapes, unheard of toils,
He gain'd the port by strict adherence,
To rules laid down by Perseverance.

His views and mine, appear the same,
Both wish to traffic rhyme for fame!
But both, I fear, will yet be cheated,
And our aspiring hopes defeated.

When next he comes where WITS assemble,
Where timid authors learn to tremble,
Where some unskill'd *verbosely mutter*,
And others noble precepts utter;
Give him my compliments, and tell him,
I'm sorry any thing befel him;
That has a tendency to induce,
His bardship to demand a truce:
Now lest example should undo,
The precept that I have in view,
I'll ask your pardon for the intrusion,
And shortly come to a conclusion:
My precept now ye bards attend to,
Whose *verbose mutterings* there's no end to;
Remember that a long production,
Containing nothing like instruction,
Many will censure, none admire,
'Such—only will disgust, and tire.

DOMINIC MYRTLE.

*Mount-Holly, Jan. 8, 1806.*

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FOR THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE.

## TO THE GENIUS OF THE STORM.

*Written June 22, 1804.*

Oh! thou whose rude breath blust'ring through the air,
Impels the clouds that summer skies deform,
Once more permit us Phœbus' beams to share,
And cease to wake the elemental storm.

Lo! drooping Ceres deprecates thy power,
And mourns in tears thy desolating sway,
The glooms of winter shroud her golden hour,
And louring skies prolong the dreary day.

With sorrowing eye the peasant views the mead,
By thee deprived of all its promised bloom,
With quick progression, showers to showers succeed,
And summer yields to waning autumn's gloom.

No bending harvests court the reaper's hand;
But prostrate kiss the inundated soil,
And meagre famine scowling o'er the land,
With disappointment mocks his patient toil.

Oh! then recal the rude impetuous blast,
That sweeps indignant o'er the moisten'd plain,
Dispel the clouds—and all thy terrors past,
Let peace and plenty crown the rustic train.

LYRICUS.

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SELECTED FOR THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE.

## *Allegory of Prosperity and Adversity.*

I am indebted to a correspondent for the following allegory. The manner in which it is written, and the moral it contains, will be a better recommendation of it, than any compliment of mine. I shall therefore lay it before my readers without farther preface.

Prosperity and Adversity, the daughters of Providence, were sent to the house of a rich Phœnician merchant, named Velasco, whose residence was at Tyre, the capital city in that kingdom.

Prosperity, the eldest, was beautiful as the morning, and cheerful as the spring; but Adversity was sorrowful and ill-favoured.

Velasco had two sons, Felix and Urania. They were both bred to commerce, though liberally educated, and had lived together from their infancy in the strictest harmony and friendship. But love, before whom all the affections of the soul are as the traces of a ship upon the ocean, which remain only for a moment, threatened in an evil hour to set them at variance; for both were became enamoured with the beauties of Prosperity. The nymph, like one of the daughters of men, gave encouragement to each by turns; but to avoid a particular declaration, she avowed a resolution never to marry, unless her sister, from whom she said it was impossible for her to be long separated, was married at the same time.

Velasco, who was no stranger to the passions of his sons, and who dreaded every thing from their violence, to prevent consequences, obliged them by his authority to decide their pretensions by lots; each previously engaging in a solemn oath to marry the nymph that should fall to his share. The lots were accordingly drawn; and Prosperity became the wife of Felix, and Adversity of Uranio.

Soon after the celebration of these

nuptials, Velasco died, having bequeathed to his eldest son Felix the house wherein he dwelt, together with the greatest part of his large fortune and effects.

The husband of Prosperity was so transported with the gay disposition and enchanting beauties of his bride, that he cloathed her in gold and silver, and adorned her with jewels of inestimable value. He built a palace for her in the woods; he turned rivers into his gardens, and beautified their banks with temples and pavilions. He entertained at his table the nobles of the land, delighting their ears with music, and their eyes with magnificence. But his kindred he beheld as strangers, and the companions of his youth passed by unregarded. His brother also became hateful in his sight, and in process of time he commanded the doors of his house to be shut against him.

But as the stream flows from its channel, and loses itself among the vallies, unless confined by banks; so also will the current of fortune be dissipated, unless bounded by economy. In a few years the estate of Felix was wasted by extravagance, his merchandize failed him by neglect, and his effects were seized by the merciless hands of creditors. He applied himself for support to the nobles and great men whom he had feasted and made presents to, but his voice was as the voice of a stranger, and they remembered not his face. The friends whom he had neglected derided him in their turn, his wife also insulted him, and turned her back upon him and fled. Yet was his heart so bewitched with her sorceries, that he pursued her with entreaties, until, by her haste to abandon him, her mask fell off, and discovered to him a face as withered and deformed, as before it had appeared youthful and engaging.

What became of him afterwards tradition does not relate with certainty. It is believed that he fled into Egypt, and lived precariously on the scanty benevolence of a few friends, who had not totally deserted him, and that he died in a short time, wretched and an exile.

Let us now return to Uranio, who, as we have already observed, had been driven out of doors by his brother Felix.—Adversity, though hateful to his heart, and a spectre to his eyes, was the constant attendant upon his steps: and to aggravate his sorrow, he received certain intelligence that his richest vessel was taken by a Sardinian pirate, that another was lost upon the Lybian Syrtes, and, to complete all, that the banker, with whom the greatest part of his ready money was entrusted, had deserted his creditors and retired into Sicily. Collecting therefore the small remains of his fortune, he bid adieu to Tyre, and, led by Adversity through unfrequented roads and forests overgrown with thickets, he came at last to a small village at the foot of a mountain. Here they took up their abode for some time; and Adversity, in return for all the anxiety he had suffered, softening the severity of her looks, administered to him the most faithful counsel, weaning his heart from the immoderate love of earthly things, and teaching him to revere the gods, and to place his whole trust and happiness in their government and protection. She humanized his soul, made him modest and humble, taught him to compassionate the distresses of his fellow-creatures, and inclined him to relieve them.

"I am sent," said she, "by the gods, to those alone whom they love: for I not only train them up by my severe discipline to future glory, but also prepare them to receive with a greater relish all such moderate enjoyments as are not inconsistent with this probationary state.—As the spider, when assailed, seeks shelter in its inmost web, so the mind which I afflict, contracts its wandering thoughts, and flies for happiness to itself. It was I who raised the characters of Cato, Socrates and Timoleon, to so divine a height, and set them up as guides and examples to every future age. Prosperity, my smiling, but treacherous sister, too frequently delivers those whom she has seduced, to be scourged by her cruel followers, Anguish and Despair: while Adversity never fails to lead those who will be instructed by her, to the blissful habitation of Tranquillity and Content."

Uranio listened to her words with great attention; and as he looked earnestly on her face, the deformity of it seemed insensibly to decrease. By gentle degrees his aversion to her abated; and at last, he gave himself wholly up to her counsel and direction. She would often repeat to him the wise maxim of the philosopher, "That those who want the fewest things, approach nearest to the gods, who want nothing." She admonished him to turn his eyes to the many thousands beneath him, instead of gazing on the few who live in pomp and splendor; and in his addresses to the gods, instead of asking for riches and popularity, to pray for a virtuous mind, a quiet state, an unblameable life, and a death full of good hopes.

Finding him to be every day more and more composed and resigned, though neither enamoured of her face, nor delighted with her society, she at last addressed him in the following manner.

"As gold is purged and refined from dross by the fire, so is adversity sent by Providence to try and improve the virtue of mortals. The end obtained, my task is finished; and I now leave you, to go and give an account of my charge. Your brother, whose lot was prosperity, and whose condition you so much envied, after having experienced the error of his choice, is at last released by death from the most wretched of lives. Happy has it been for Uranio, that his lot was Adversity, whom if he remembers as he ought, his life will be honourable, and his death happy."

As she pronounced these words, she vanished from his sight. But though her features at that moment, instead of inspiring their usual horror, seemed to display a kind of languishing beauty; yet as Uranio, in spite of his utmost efforts, could never prevail upon himself to love her, he neither regretted her departure, nor wished for her return. But though he rejoiced in her absence, he treasured up her counsels in his heart, and grew happy by the practice of them.

He afterwards betook himself again to merchandize; and having in a short time acquired a competency sufficient for the real enjoyments of life, he retreated to a little farm, which he had bought for that purpose, and where he determined to continue the remainder of his days.—here he employed his time in planting, gardening and husbandry, in quelling all disorderly passions, and in forming his mind by the lessons of Adversity. He took great delight in a little cell or hermitage in his garden, which stood under a tuft of trees, encompassed with eglantine and honey-suckles. Adjoining to it was a cold-bath, formed by a spring issuing from a rock, and over the door was written in large characters the following inscription:

> Beneath this moss-grown roof, within this cell,
> Truth, Liberty, Content, and Virtue dwell.
> Say, you who dare this happy place disdain,
> What palace can display so fair a train?

He lived to a good old age; and died honoured and lamented.

WORLD.

## SPECTRES.

As all popular and long established opinions are objects of curiosity and research for the philosopher, we think the belief of spectres worthy of some attention even in this light. It will therefore, we hope, give some satisfaction to the philosophical reader, to see a short account of the sources or principles from which this belief is derived. But as the belief of spectres is connected with other opinions which appear to us highly injurious to Religion: opinions which have been supported by many learned men, and which are still believed by some men of literary education—it will also be proper, in the first place, to consider the evidence on which this belief rests, in which we must consider both their probability and credibility.

In the present investigation we mean to set aside altogether the celestial appearances recorded in the scripture, as being founded on unquestionable evidence, and perfectly agreeable to those rules by which the Deity acts in the usual course of his providence. The Israelites, during the existence of their state, were immediately under the authority of God, not only as the moral governor of the world, but as the king of Israel. In the infancy of the world, while men were rude and unenlightened, and entirely under the influence of Idolatry, many revelations were necessary to preserve in their minds pure ideas of the nature of God, and of the worship due to him. They were necessary also to pave the way for that illustrious dispensation which the Lord Jesus came from heaven to diffuse over the world. Every celestial appearance recorded in scripture was exhibited for some wise and important purpose, which must be apparent to every person who considers these appearances with attention. But when the scriptures were written and published, and the Christian religion fully established, revelation ceased, and miracles and heavenly messengers were no longer requisite. What credit then ought we to give to those marvellous stories related in ancient authors concerning prodigies in the heavens, and the apparition of angels both good and bad?

It is not pretended that any of those prodigies and appearances were exhibited for purposes equally great and important with those which are described in scripture: and can we suppose that the All-wise Governor of the world would permit his Angels to render themselves visible to the eye of man for no purpose at all, or for a purpose which might have been equally well accomplished without their interposition? Would this be consistent with perfect wisdom, or would it be consistent even with the excellence and superiority of understanding which we are taught to ascribe to these elevated beings? The whole will of God is revealed to us in the scriptures; what further use for the visible interposition of Angels? It may be objected, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" We answer, That Angels may animate and support good men by an invisible interposition.

And if God has given no commission to his Angels to deliver to men the publication of the Christian religion, is there any probability that he would give any commission or any license to evil spirits? It will be said, that this doctrine is clearly taught in the New Testament, in these words, "The Devil goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." We will not avail ourselves of the interpretation of some, who say that the word devil, which in the Greek language signifies an *adversary*, or *slanderer*, refers here to some human being, who was a violent enemy of the Christians.—All that can be deduced from these words, upon the supposition that they refer to a malignant spirit, is merely that he goeth about seducing men to vice. But it is not by assuming a hideous form, and presenting himself to the midnight traveller, that such a purpose is to be accomplished. A spirit may probably have direct access to our minds without the intervention of any thing corporeal; and by exciting our passions may plunge us into vice, which is the only object such a being is supposed to have in view.—None of the marvellous stories which we have heard concerning the apparition of evil spirits lead us to conclude that they appear to entice men to commit crimes. We never heard of any evil spirits that required men to steal to perpetrate robbery or murder. They, only appear to terrify some crazy timorous individuals, who have whims and fancies enough of their own to agitate their minds, though no preternatural vision should ever appear to them. It is not consistent, therefore, with the character of God, and what he has revealed to us of his will, to believe that he would commission good Angels, or permit evil Angels, to appear to men since the propagation of the Gospel, or indeed at any former period of the world, unless some great and mighty purpose was to be fulfilled. It is not consistent with what we know of the nature of good or bad angels to suppose, that though permission were granted them occasionally to shew themselves to men, that they would appear in that way which story-tellers describe.

It is equally improbable that the spirits of the dead who are removed from the world, should again be permitted to visit it. At death men undergo as great, perhaps a greater change, than when they came first into the light of the sun. Is it not therefore as improbable that a man should return in a visible corporeal form after death, as that, after having arrived at manhood, he should return to the state in which he was before his birth? Such changes as these are evidently made permanent by the invariable laws of nature. But suppose it were possible, for what purpose should they return? To describe to us what is passing in the other world, to animate us to virtue, by informing us of the rewards which there await the good; or to alarm us, by describing the punishment of the wicked. These seem important reasons. But Divine Providence has wisely thrown a veil over futurity. We know every thing of the other world from the scripture which it is proper for us at present to know. And as to incentives to virtue, we are already blessed with a number sufficiently great and powerful for moral beings, who are to act from rational motives, and not from compulsion. "He that will not hear Moses and the prophets, will not be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

There is one strong objection against the probability of spectres, which is sufficient to prove that they are not intelligent creatures; or at least that they possess so small a degree of intelligence, that they are unqualified to act with prudence, to propose any end to themselves, or use the proper means to come to that end. Ghosts often appear in order to discover some crime that has been committed: but they never appear to a magistrate, or person in authority, but to some illiterate clown, who happens to live near the place where the crime was perpetrated; to some person who has no connection with the affair at all, and who in general is the most improper in the world for making the discovery. For instance, in Granville's *Saducismus* tri-

umphatus (a book written in the last century by a Chaplain of Charles II. in support of the common opinions respecting witchcraft and apparitions,) we have the following story :

James Haddock, a farmer, was married to Elenor Welsh, by whom he had a son. After the death of Haddock, his wife married one Davis; and both agreed to defraud the son by the former marriage of a lease bequeathed to him by his father. Upon this the ghost of Haddock appeared to one Francis Taverner, the servant of Lord Chicester, and desired him to go to Elenor Welsh, and to inform her that it was the will of her former husband that their son should enjoy the lease. Taverner did not at first execute this commission ; but he was continually haunted by the apparition in the most hideous shapes, which even threatened to tear him in pieces, till at last he delivered the message. Now, had this spectre had the least common sense, it would have appeared first to Elenor Welsh and her husband Davis, and frightened them into compliance at once, and not have kept poor Taverner in such constant disquietude, who had no concern in the matter.

Another very odd circumstance respecting apparitions in general must not be omitted, which is, that they have no power to speak till they are addressed. In the 27th of Granville's relations we read of an old woman that appeared often to David Hunter, a neat-herd, at the house of the Bishop of Down and Conners. Whenever she appeared, he found himself obliged to follow her ; and for three quarters of a year poor David spent the whole of almost every night in scampering up and down through the woods after this old woman. How long this extraordinary employment might have continued, it is impossible to guess, had not David's violent fatigue made him one night exclaim, " Lord bless me ! would I were dead !—Shall I never be delivered from this misery ?" On which the phantom replied, " Lord bless me too ! It was happy you spoke first, for till then I had no power to speak, though I have followed you so long !" Then she gave him a message to her two sons, though David told her he remembered nothing about her. David, it seems, neglected to deliver the message ; at which the old beldame was so much provoked, that she returned and hit him a hearty blow on the shoulder, which made him cry out, and then speak to her. Now if she could not speak till David addressed her, why might she not have applied this oratorial medicine the first time she appeared to him ? It would saved both herself and him many a weary journey ; and certainly David would much rather have had even half a dozen of blows from her choppy fists, than have wanted so many night's sleep. To complete the story, we must add, that when David's wife found it impossible to keep him from following the troublesome visitor, she trudged after him, but never was gratified with a sight of the enchantress. David's little dog too was a dutiful attendant on his master during the pilgrimage.

It is remarked by Granville, that ghosts are generally very eager to be gone. Indeed they are often so much so, that they do not stay to tell their errand.—One would be induced from this, as well as the circumstances already mentioned, to think that they are the stupidest and the dullest of the dead that assume the appearance of ghosts ; unless we adopt the ingenious solution of Granville, " That it is a very hard and painful thing for them to force their thin and tenuous bodies into a visible consistence ; that their bodies must needs be exceedingly compreseed ; and that therefore they must be in haste to be delivered from the unnatural pressure.

*(To be continued.)*

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*Selected for the Evening Fire-side.*

On beds of snow the moon-beams slept,
And chilly was the midnight gloom,
When by a damp grave Ellen wept:
Sweet girl ! it was her Lindor's tomb.

A warm tear gush'd, the wintry air
Congeal'd it as it flow'd away;
All night it lay a dew-drop there,
At morn it glitter'd in the ray.

An angel, wandering from its sphere,
Beheld this bright this frozen gem,
To dove-ey'd Pity took the tear,
And hung it on her diadem.

MOORE.

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*Description of the Ostrich.—Abridged from Buffon.*

The Ostrich was known in the remotest ages, and mentioned by the most ancient authors. It is frequently the subject from which the sacred writers draw their comparisons and allegories. In still more distant periods, its flesh seems to have been commonly used for food ; for the legislator of the Jews prohibits it as unclean. It occurs also in Herodotus, the most ancient of profane historians, and in the writings of the first philosophers who have treated of the history of nature.

The family of the Ostrich, therefore, is of great antiquity ; nor in the course of ages has it varied or degenerated from its native purity. It has always remained on its paternal estate ; and its lustre has been transmitted unsullied by foreign intercourse. In short, it is among the birds what the elephant is among the quadrupeds, a distinct race, widely separated from all the others by characters as striking as they are invariable.

The Ostrich is reckoned the largest of the birds, its weight being sometimes eighty pounds ; but it is deprived of the prerogative of the winged tribe, the power of flying.

They are peculiar to Africa, the islands contiguous to that continent, and that part of Asia which borders on it. They are very numerous, on the mountains situated on the southwest of Alexandria. They prefer the most solitary and the most arid tracts, that are scarcely ever refreshed by genial showers ; and this confirms the account of the Arabians, that they do not drink. They assemble in these deserts in numerous flocks, which at a distance resemble troops of cavalry, and as such have alarmed many caravans. Their life must be spent rather hardly in these vast barren solitudes ; but there they taste the sweets of liberty and love. And is not the desert which offers these ravishing pleasures converted into an Elysian field ? To enjoy these inestimable blessings they fly the presence of man ; but man learns the profit he can derive from them ; he haunts them in their most savage retreats ; he feeds on their eggs, their blood, their fat, their flesh ; and decks himself with their plumes.

Whole nations have merited the name of Struthophagi, from the custom of feeding on the Ostrich ; and these people bordered on the Elephantophagi, who had not better cheer. For this dish Apicius directs, and with great reason, a poignant sort of sauce ; which proves that it was used among the Romans ; but we have other evidence ; the emperor Heliogabalus once ordered the brains of six hundred Ostriches to be served up for a single repast. Even at present the inhabitants of Lybia and Numidia feed upon tame ones.

The Ethiopians flay the Ostriches, and sell their skins to the merchants of Alexandria. The leather is very thick, and the Arabians formerly made it into inner

jackets, which served instead of a cuirass and buckler. The long white plumes of the tail and wings have been always highly esteemed; the ancients used them for decoration, and appropriated them to distinguish the military profession, in which they succeeded to the feathers of the swan; for birds have always furnished the polished nations, as well as the savage tribes, with the materials of ornament. In Turkey, even at present, a Janissary, who has distinguished himself by his warlike atchievements, is entitled to wear them in his turban; and in the seraglio, the Sultana, when she would heighten her charms, employs them to decorate her person. In the kingdom of Congo, these feathers are mixed with those of the peacock, to form ensigns of war; and the ladies of England and of Italy make them into a sort of fans. It is well known what prodigious consumption is made of them in Europe for hats, helmets, theatrical dresses, furniture, canopies, funeral decorations, and even for female ornaments: and indeed it must be allowed, that they have a fine effect, both from their natural and artificial colours, and from their gentle waving motion.

If we consider that bulk and swiftness are combined in the Ostrich, we must be convinced that they are extremely strong; yet it never attacks the weak, and seldom opposes the assaults of the powerful. Covered with a hard thick coat of leather, and furnished with a broad sternum, which serves for a breast-plate, and defended by another callous breast-blate, it hardly feels the application of external blows; and it escapes from the greater and more serious dangers by the rapidity of its flight.

Its cry resembles the wailing of a hoarse child, and is still more plaintive; how gloomy is it then and even terrible, to travellers who penetrate with timorous apprehensions into the immensity of these deserts, where every living being, man not excepted, is an object of dread and danger!

## SUMMARY OF INTELLIGENCE.

FOREIGN.—By the British packet arrived at New-York in 44 days from Falmouth, intelligence of importance is received respecting European affairs both by "flood and field." The English squadron under Sir Richard Strachan, cruizing off Ferrol on the 5th of November, fell in with and captured, after a severe engagement, four French ships of the line; they have since arrived at Plymouth.

A treaty of offensive and defensive alliance has been concluded between Prussia and Russia. On this treaty the London Courier remarks.

"By this treaty Prussia engages to make a common cause with England, Russia and Austria, if Bonaparte does not accede to the terms of peace which have been proposed to him. The object of Duroc's mission to Berlin was to invite Prussia either to join France immediately, or in the event of her not joining her, to preserve a strict neutrality. The first proposition was immediately rejected, when Prussia evinced an intention of no longer remaining neutral, and transmitted a note on the 14th ult. to the French Ministers La foret and Durcc. Bonaparte in answer to that note demanded peremptorily, that Prussia should immediately declare for or against him. The King of Prussia instantly communicated this peremptory demand to the Emperor of Russia, and the two monarchs in concert returned an answer, in which they proposed—

"That Naples should be evacuated by the French troops; that the treaty of Luneville should be executed to its full extent; that Switzerland and Holland should be declared independent!—and that the regal dignity of Italy be forever separated from the Imperial dignity of France. If these propositions were acceded to, Russia promised to evacuate Corfu; but if they were rejected, the Prussian army would commence its operations."

The Swedish Monarch, with an army of 25,000 Swedes and as many Russians, is on his march to the field of battle.

The latest London paper received states that a king's messenger and a Prussian officer of rank had just arrived with important dispatches from Berlin; their contents had not transpired.

The Rev. Dr. Nelson, brother and heir of the gallant Admiral, has been created Earl Nelson of Trafalgar. Admiral Collingwood has been created a Baron.

It is said that in Great Britain the number of people capable of rising in arms *en masse* from 15 to 60 years of age are 2,744,847—that the Volunteers in the united kingdom last March were 700,000—that there are about 93,030 marriages yearly—that of 63 marriages three only are without offspring—that every 38 years produces a new generation; consequently there have been 176 generations since the creation of the world—that there die in Great Britain every year about 332,708, every month about 22,592; every week 6,893; every day 914; every hour about 40; and every three minutes 2!

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DOMESTIC.—Dr. Aires, from New Jersey, who has lately explored several of our western counties in search of gold, reports that he has discovered gold in branches and creeks in the counties of Cabarrus, Montgomery and Randolph, in a North and North East course, and in the counties of Mecklenburg in a South and South West direction from the mine first found, where none had ever been found before, except in three or four branches near Reed's (the first discovery) in Cabarrus county. A few pieces of gold intermixed with stone have been found on the surface of the earth, and some ploughed up in most of the said counties. Several of the said water courses contain considerable quantities of gold dust, which, he says, can be collected no way profitably, but by washing the sand with a machine proper for the purpose, after the first or common washing, and then by mixing mercury with the sand thus washed, which will unite with the particles of gold, and the amalgum thereby formed disunited, by sublimating the same in a suitable furnace.

*The following letter addressed to the editor of the National Intelligencer, giving an account of the Cherokee Indians in civilization is too interesting to be omitted.*

SIR,

The late arrival in this city of a deputation of Cherokee chiefs having from their appearance excited considerable attention, has induced the following statements and observations relating to that nation. To speak generally, the progress of the useful arts, variety of manufactures, and pursuits of agriculture is so great amongst these people as ought effectually to remove prejudices that formerly existed against the red men of America. A person travelling through the Cherokee country is agreeably surprised to find the cards and the spinning wheel in use in almost every family. They raise the cotton and the indigo, spin and dye the yarn, and weave it into handsome cloth, with which they clothe their families in a decent and comfortable manner in the habits of the white people.—There is more than one thousand spinning wheels, and upwards of one hundred looms in the Cherokee nation, which are all in use with much industry. Amongst them are found silver-smiths, black-smiths, coopers, saddlers, tanners, shoe makers and wheel wrights; specimens of these manufactures may be seen at the house of Mr. Morin, in this city. These mechanics are principally self-taught, part of their tools are furnished by the public, and part by themselves; the plough and the hoe are in constant use amongst them. By the assistance of some white men, they make large quantities of salt-petre, and powder, with which their own people are supplied at a much cheaper rate than formerly, and some carried out of their country to sell to the white people in Georgia and Tennessee. They have several grist mills and one saw mill. So far have they changed the hunting life for pursuits leading

to civilization, and all this has been done ſince the year 1794, when there was not a pair of cards, ſpinning wheel or loom, or even a mechanic in their nation. They have large ſtocks of black cattle, horſes and other domeſtic animals; they make ſome butter, and cheeſe of a good quality is made in a number of families. Since agriculture and the domeſtic arts have become the principal objects of purſuit, their population has evidently increaſed.

There are now ſeven ſchools in their country, where more than one hundred children are taught reading and writing, and ſome of them arithmetic. They are faſt emerging from a ſtate of barbarity to a ſtate of improved and amiable ſociety, and under the countenance and foſtering hand of government, will become uſeful citizens, and will contribute no inconſiderable portion to the ſtrength of our country; to which they are every day becoming more and more attached from intereſt and affection. There has formerly exiſted an erroneous opinion that the aborigines of this country could not be brought to a ſtate of civilization. A greater part of the Cherokees are now actually civilized; to fix the preciſe point where barbarity ceaſes and where civilization begins, is perhaps impoſſible. Many of theſe people have conſiderable information and great decency of manners; theſe are ſtrong marks of civilization. If in any ſociety it be required that every individual be well informed, and decent in manners before that ſociety could be entitled to the appellation of civilized ſociety, I don't know what conſiderable diſtrict of any country would be entitled to the appellation. The fact is, that the Cherokees have made conſiderable advances in civilization, the conſideration of which will afford much ſatisfaction to the government, to the adminiſtration, and to the friend of man every where. It has been ſome expence to the government; but it has almoſt deſtroyed their thirſt for war, which although it flattered the pride of the warrior, muſt, if perſiſted in, eventually terminate in their extinction: but in the revolution of events their deſtiny has been placed in the hands of the United States, whoſe magnanimity it is preſumed will not let them periſh. I have ſeveral times viſited the principal ſchool which is under the patronage of the government; the progreſs of the children in reading and writing is equal to that of any other children of their age.—The order of the ſchool and decency of manners excites, in the mind of the ſpectator, pleaſing and affecting contemplation; it would wreſt from the barbarous his ferocity, and evince to the mind that it is not the color of the ſkin that deſignates the ſavage.

I am reſpectfully, Sir,
Your obedient ſervant,
RETURN J. MEIGS.

*City of Waſhington, Dec. 20, 1805.*

The Indians at Waſhington all viſited the capitol on the 30th ult. ſpent about an hour in the Houſe, and about the ſame time in the Senate.

The principal Oſage Chief died very ſuddenly on the night of the ſame day.

The oldeſt inhabitant of Norfolk does not recollect ſo mild a ſeaſon as the preſent. An account from there ſays, "We had *Green Peaſe* expoſed for ſale in our market on Tueſday laſt!"

Complaints in the paſt ſeaſon have been made, that the Canker Worms which a few years ſince, committed ſuch depredations on our orchards, have again made their appearance, commenced their deſtructive career, and threatened a repetition of the calamity formerly inflicted. The apple in its various uſes is ſo extremely neceſſary and convenient to every claſs of citizens in the community, that its preſervation from the ravages of theſe devouring reptiles, is an object of no ſmall magnitude. [*Middleſex Gaz.*]

Sundry notices of a Comet, or *Comet-like* appearance, lately diſcovered at Columbia, S. C. have been made in the public prints, the following is a ſhort account of the ſame phenomenon, obſerved in this city.

On the 8th December laſt, about 6 o'clock in the evening, a nebelous appearance was diſcovered about 25 degrees above the ſouthern horizon, not far from the meridian. On viewing it through a teleſcope, it was immediately judged to be a Comet—the nucleus or body was plainly diſtinguiſhable from the bur or nebula which ſurrounded it. By obſerving its poſition with reſpect to ſundry known ſtars in its vicinity, its place was pretty accurately aſcertained, and marked on a large celeſtial globe—its latitude being about 17 degrees ſouth, and its longitude about 10 degrees of Piſces.

On the next evening, about the ſame hour, it exhibited nearly the ſame appearance; only that it had changed its place about 18 degrees—being now in about 31 degrees of ſouth latitude, and its longitude about the beginning of Piſces. On the following evening though remarkably clear, the comet was no longer diſcernable—it had ſunk below the horizon.

It is not pretended, that from theſe obſervations alone, any thing of importance can be deduced relative to the orbit of this comet. They may, however, ſerve to aſcertain that the appearance was in reality that of a *Comet*, and not that of a *Double-Star*, as inſinuated by S. P. G. in a communication to the Charleſton City Gazette.

Interments in the different burial grounds of the City and Liberties of Philadelphia, ending 4th inſt. Adults 16—Children 8—Total 24.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

With the productions of the various writers in proſe and poetry who have contributed to enrich the pages of the firſt volume, we hope to be liberally favoured. Their communications ſhall always receive the attention they merit.

From CAUSTICUS we hope to hear often. The admirers of wit and humour will anxiouſly expect his appearance in our little hemiſphere, and to ourſelves it will afford real gratification. *Ex libris deprehendi hominem ardentis ingenii, variæ lectionis, et multæ memoriæ.*

The SPERMACETI CANDLE's radiance would gladden the circle that ſurround our *Fire-ſide*, and give a luſtre to our collection that would enſure it a firſt rank in the library of every lover of the muſes.

If VAROLA ſhould employ his *literary leiſure* in the noble effort to promote Morality, and inculcate Virtue, we ſhall cheerfully diffuſe his well-deſigned effuſions.

The DRUID's "wood notes wild" we hope have not ceaſed forever.

SIMON SLOW and SAM SAUNTER are cordially invited to bend their ſteps towards our letter box. The follies and vices of the times require the laſh of ſatire, or the ſportive ſhafts of humour; and to ſuch writers as theſe belongs this peculiar province.

T.'s eſſay appears to be well-meant, but we apprehend it ought to be compreſſed into a ſmaller compaſs before it meets the eye of the public.

"PHILANTHROPY" on love is too incorrect for inſertion in our miſcellany.

AVERTERA's eſſay we hope is not applicable to the preſent time—we do not deem it calculated for the Fire-ſide.

DORCAS is *detained for adjudication*.

The communications of Proſpectus, &c. &c. are under conſideration.

In compliance with the wiſhes of our "deſerving correſpondent" we have reviewed the *pigeon-hole* of *oblivion*, but have diſcovered in thoſe *dread domains* no *ſhade* of a *departed genius*. In conſequence, we confirm the decree of our predeceſſors, from a conviction that unlike the depredators on commerce, they have condemned nothing for *being valuable*.

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